

Remarks by Jessica Long, U.S. Embassy Chargé d’Affaires at the USAID TradeHub Event



U.S. Chargé d’Affaires to Namibia, Jessica Long

Good afternoon!

It is a pleasure to be here with you for this event showcasing and celebrating the successes achieved through the U.S. Agency for International Development’s six-year TradeHub program.

The U.S. Government prioritizes creating jobs in Namibia through growing Namibian exports to the United States and other countries, increasing U.S. investment in Namibia, and supporting Namibian entrepreneurs.

Today, participants in the Namibian, regional, and U.S. export markets will share the successes and lessons learned from their experiences promoting and providing sustainable economic growth opportunities in Namibia through the USAID TradeHub.

There will also be an opportunity to learn about the many resources available to Namibian exporters, Trade Promotion Service Providers, the government, and other stakeholders.

The United States is a proud partner of the private sector in Namibia, particularly firms seeking to explore opportunities in the South African and U.S. markets through the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA.

AGOA is a unilateral trade preference program providing duty-free access into the United States for over 6,400 qualifying exports from eligible sub-Saharan African countries, including Namibia.

Through the USAID TradeHub, the United States has helped Namibian firms achieve AGOA and non-AGOA-related exports valued at US\$2.7 million (about N\$ 43 million), over the past three years.

The USAID TradeHub has worked with several Namibian export companies including Taneta Investment, Desert Hills, Plastic Packaging, local charcoal producers, and nearly a dozen other firms, through experienced Trade

Promotion Service Providers, to build and expand professional networks with international importers. You can now buy Namibian marula oil and charcoal in the United States.

Firms received support to enhance export readiness and have recently been featured in major industry catalogues as well as virtual trade portals.

The firms also received business development training to produce brochures and other marketing tools to make and close deals. The USAID TradeHub further provided Namibian companies support in obtaining certifications that enable access to overseas markets and premium prices.

Last year, Plastic Packaging, a TradeHub partner, won the inaugural Namibia Exporter of the Year Award and proceeded to win the Regional Exporter of the Year Award for 2021 in South Africa.

Plastic Packaging employs close to 500 people in Namibia, Angola, and South Africa, and benefits from the USAID TradeHub's support with migration testing, a buyer requirement to ensure that the product is safe for use with food.

In May 2021, the Government of Namibia launched an AGOA Utilization Strategy. This strategy – developed with support from the USAID TradeHub, the Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade, and the private sector – provides a roadmap of recommendations for diversifying Namibia's exports under the AGOA program.

Specifically, the TradeHub assisted Taneta Investment to become listed on Amazon and supported Desert Hills to exhibit their Nara Food Oil brand as part of 38 companies from the region featured at the June 2022 Summer Fancy Food Show under the African Fine Food Pavilion in New York.

In total, the USAID TradeHub has successfully assisted 106 Namibian firms to engage in business-to-business events with potential buyers, showcase their products, and start new business discussions. And new business and export opportunities means more Namibians with jobs and more people around the world enjoying Namibia's amazing products.

I am so pleased to be here today to take another important step in our shared journey to strengthen investment and trade ties between the United States and Namibia.

Growing our bilateral economic and commercial relationship is one of our top priorities. Commercial diplomacy is central to our foreign policy. And the United States, like Namibia, is committed to finding ways to foster equality and equity in our country and build a more inclusive economy for all.

I am excited to announce that U.S. President Biden will host the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit in Washington, D.C. this December. The Summit will enable us to continue to advance our common agenda of promoting economic growth, good governance, and peace in a post-pandemic world.

This forum will also provide an opportunity to connect and increase partnership with Africa and advance Presidential initiatives, including Prosper Africa, Power Africa, and a new Presidential initiative focused on digital transformation in Africa.

I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the United States to ensure lasting economic advancement in Namibia. We are grateful for the efforts of the Government of Namibia, along with its private and civil society partners, in supporting export-led growth.

I would also like to extend a sincere thank you to the many Namibian stakeholders present here today. We look forward to a fruitful learning and sharing experience this afternoon.

Thank you.